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## benefactive construction

construction pairing the meaning ‘*agent* carries out action involving *patient/theme* for the benefit of a *beneficiary*’ either with the form [NP<sub>1-subj</sub> V NP<sub>2-obj</sub> PP] or with the form [NP<sub>1-subj</sub> V NP<sub>3-obj</sub> NP<sub>2-obj</sub>].

### Benefaktiv-Konstruktion

Konstruktion bestehend aus der Form [NP<sub>1-subj</sub> V NP<sub>2-obj</sub> PP] oder der Form [NP<sub>1-subj</sub> V NP<sub>3-obj</sub> NP<sub>2-obj</sub>] und der Bedeutung ‚*Agens* führt eine auf ein *Patiens* oder *Thema* gerichtete Handlung zum Nutzen eines *Benefaktivs* (*Nutzniessers*) aus‘.

The role of the *agentis* realised by the subject-NP (NP<sub>1</sub>), the role of the *patient/theme* by an object-NP (NP<sub>2</sub>) and that of the *beneficiary* either by a PP or another object-NP (NP<sub>3</sub>). The formal variants of the Benefactive Construction are exemplified in (1) and (2) respectively:

(1) [Sally]<sub>NP1-subj</sub> [bought]<sub>V</sub> [a book]<sub>NP2-obj</sub> [for John]<sub>PP</sub>.

(2) [Sally]<sub>NP1-subj</sub> [bought]<sub>V</sub> [John]<sub>NP3-obj</sub> [a book]<sub>NP2-obj</sub>.

Benefactive constructions consisting of three NPs encode the *beneficiary* either as a primary object-NP (i.e., the first of two object NPs), yielding the double object pattern as in English, Indonesian and Bantu, or as an indirect-object-NP, instantiating the direct-and-indirect-object pattern of German, Japanese, Italian, Spanish and Sinhala (cf. *Shibatani* 1996: 174). Another formal variant of the benefactive construction, different from those in (1) and (2), expresses the *beneficiary* as a verbal affix, as illustrated by the following example from the Papuan language Hua (cf. *Foley* 1986: 98):

(3) zu ki-na d-te

house build-3P.Sg. Ben 1P.Sg.-put 3P.Sg. Decl

He built me a house.

The patterns in (1) and (2) differ syntactically in that the PP realising the role of the *beneficiary* in (1) has the status of an adjunct, while the primary-object-NP in (2) is an argument (cf. *Shibatani* 1996: 159). Hence, the PP of the PP variant combines more freely with different types of verbs than the primary-object-NP of the double object variant, cf. (3) and (4) (examples and acceptability judgements from *Allerton* 1978):

(4) Uncle Jim cleaned some shoes / washed some socks / answered some letters / watched a television programme for Margaret.

(5) Uncle Jim cleaned Margaret some shoes / ?washed Margaret some socks / ?\*answered Margaret some letters / \*watched Margaret a television programme.

To account for the restrictions observed with respect to the double object pattern, different constraints have been proposed, including lexico-semantic and morphophonological properties of the verb, the aspect of the beneficial event, and the semantics of the *agent* and *beneficiary* (see *Fellbaum* 2005 for an extensive discussion).

Some authors have claimed that the double object variant of the Benefactive Construction in English lacks a purely benefactive interpretation, because the *beneficiary* is always at the same time a *recipient* (cf. *Colleman* 2010). In other languages, the double object pattern may additionally be used to refer to other types of benefactive events, as exemplified by (6) for French and (7) for German:

(6) [Je]<sub>NP-subj</sub> [lui]<sub>clitic-dat-ind-obj</sub> [[ai][repassé]]<sub>V</sub> [sa chemise]<sub>NP-dir-obj</sub>

[*Colleman* 2010: 230].

‘[I]<sub>NP-subj</sub> [him]<sub>clitic-dat-ind-obj</sub> [[have] [ironed]]<sub>V</sub> [his shirt]<sub>NP-dir-obj</sub>.’

I have ironed his shirt for him.

(7) [Das Mädchen]<sub>NP-subj-nom</sub> [trägt]<sub>V</sub> [der alten Frau]<sub>NP-dat-ind-obj</sub> [die Tüten]<sub>NP-acc-dir-obj</sub> [hoch]<sub>V-Particle</sub>.

[The girl]<sub>NP-subj-nom</sub> [carries]<sub>V</sub> [the old woman]<sub>NP-dat-ind-obj</sub> [the bags]<sub>NP-acc-dir-obj</sub> [upstairs]<sub>V-Particle</sub>.

The girl carries the bags upstairs for the old woman.

The indirect object-NP in these examples does not express a *recipient-beneficiary* but rather the person who, being the owner of the entity referred to by the direct-object-NP, benefits from the action carried out on his/her property (Cf. *Allerton* 1987: 28, *Colleman* 2010: 230), and the person benefitting from the *Agent*’s substituting for him/her as the performer of the action (*Colleman* 2010: 228), respectively. *Fellbaum* (2005) points out that much of the literature on the benefactive construction in English is based on constructed data. Using data from the World Wide Web, she shows that expressions like *Baby open me your door* and *Honey, can you iron me a shirt?* are also attested for English. Though such expressions received mixed grammaticality judgements in an earlier study (cf. *Allerton* 1978), they also indicate that the semantic constraints on the Benefactive Construction proposed in the literature are frequently violated and extended in actual language use (cf. *Fellbaum* 2005: 235).

## Literature

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